

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, claim 9, which was found to be allowable, has been rewritten in independent form. Allowance is requested.

The Office Action indicates that claims 1-10 are pending in this application, but a Preliminary Amendment was filed on January 26, 2004, amending claims 1, 9, and 10, and adding new claims 11-27. Since the pending claims were not examined, applicants request that the next action be non-final. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution, Applicant will address the cited references in view of the claims in their present form.

Independent claims 1, 10, and 26 define two air paths. One air path is a vacuum path, and the other is a pulsating pressure path. The vacuum path is operatively connected to the inside of a liner, into which the breast fits for milk expression. The pulsating pressure path communicates with the other side of the liner, in a space formed between the liner and the housing, to put pulsating pressure around the outside of the breast during milk expression.

Grant et al. '262 only applies vacuum, not pulsating pressure. Indeed, there is no liner separate from a housing in which to form a space for applying pulsating pressure. Grant et al. disclose a vent in the vacuum path, but there is no vent in a pulsating pressure path, as in amended claim 1.

Ford '246 discloses a liner in a housing, but a pulsating pressure path separate from the vacuum path is not disclosed. There is also no vent, as in amended claim 1.

Larson '403 does not disclose a liner, or a pulsating pressure path.

Whittlestone et al. '596, disclosed by Applicant, discloses a cup having a liner, a vacuum source, and a pulsating pressure source, but Whittlestone does not disclose a vent in the pulsating pressure path or the means for increasing the area for breast extension during milk expression, as in amended claim 1. Whittlestone also does not disclose the pulsating pressure rate of claim 10, or the manifold of claims 1, 10, and 26.

For the foregoing reasons Applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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